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ABSTRACT

This case study describes culture conflicts experienced by Vivian, an Asian language-minority preservice teacher, during two years of her teacher preparation at a large northeastern private university. Data were collected from multiple sources to understand her experiences and perspectives. These include: informant, faculty, and family interviews; participant observation field notes; student work; course syllabi; and program documents. Findings of this study support prior research that indicate bilingual and ethnic minority students experience many tensions as they attempt to reconcile conflicts in language and communication, interpersonal relations, and home and school cultures, and they suggest the need to involve families at all levels of education through projects that connect home and school. Also, findings indicated approaches in teacher training that promote opportunities to talk about cultural issues and resolution of conflicts. The study results supported the need to recruit and retain nonwhite and bilingual teachers and to identify deficiencies in multicultural teacher preparation programs. Finally, the study indicated that despite the rhetoric of increased tolerance on college campuses and in schools, prejudice and racial tensions remain serious problems in educational settings. (Contains 44 references.) (ND)

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Tensions of a Language and Ethnic Minority College Student During Teacher Preparation: A Case Study

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Tensions of a Language and Ethnic Minority College Student During Teacher Preparation: A Case Study

Abstract

Ethnic and language minority preservice teachers remain an invisible population in much of research literature. This case study describes cultural conflicts experienced by Vivian, an Asian, and language minority preservice teacher during two years of her teacher preparation. Data were collected from multiple sources to understand her experiences and perspectives. These include: informant, faculty, and family interviews, participant observation field notes, student work, course syllabi, and program documents. The constant comparative analysis revealed that Vivian attempted to reconcile conflicts in educational settings, language and communication, interpersonal relations, between home and school cultures, and economic tensions. Implications for classroom instruction, policy and programs in college settings and teacher education, and future research are discussed.

Tensions of a Language and Ethnic Minority College Student During Teacher Preparation: A Case Study

Introduction

Tomorrow's teachers will educate increasing numbers of language and ethnic minority children (Trueba, 1989). However, today's preservice teacher populations remain overwhelmingly white and English speaking (Su, 1993). This lack of fit among cultural backgrounds of students and teachers may lead to tensions and negative outcomes in the classroom. Many preservice teachers have ethnocentric cultural views (Florio-Ruane, 1994) and lack contact or ways to communicate effectively with people who differ from themselves (Farber & Armaline, 1994; Fuller, 1994). Research also suggests that some white, English-speaking preservice teachers may perceive ethnic or language minority students in deficit terms (Stoddart, 1993), prefer to teach children who are from their own cultures (Tran, Young, & Di, 1994), fail to examine the roles their cultural stances play in literacy instruction (Perez, 1993), or hold negative stereotypes that prevent communication and learning (Farber & Armaline, 1994 ; Goodwin, 1994).

Educators recognize the need to recruit and retain non white and bilingual individuals in the teaching profession (Di Martino, 1993; Dillard, 1994 ; Kestner, 1994), but identify deficiencies in multicultural teacher preparation programs (Reyhner, 1991; Sleeter & Grant, 1993). Additionally, although there are growing examples of methods to promote intercultural understandings in preservice populations like the use of journals (Farber & Armaline, 1994), autobiographical literature (Florio-Ruane, 1994; McCaleb, 1994), discussions to work through conflict (Florio-Ruane & de tar, 1995), proposed research designs (Watts Pailliotet, 1995), or descriptions of multicultural courses (Nel, 1992), there is little in depth information about bilingual and ethnic minority preservice teachers' experiences during teacher education. The purpose of this case study is to describe the experiences of an Asian, language minority preservice teacher during her full time teacher education.

Related Research

The exploration, articulation, and resolution of ethnic issues is essential for development of self esteem in many minority students (Phinney & Alipura, 1990), but Asian and bilingual preservice teachers often remain a largely invisible and voiceless population in colleges and research literature. Asian college students often experience more stress and anxiety than white students as they struggle to reconcile their home cultures with the school environment (Cheng, 1993; Zane, 1991). When students are both Asian and non English speaking, anxiety and loneliness may be exacerbated (Tran, 1992). Because Asian students are often stereotyped as a "model minority" (Endo, 1990; Magner, 1993; Toupin & Son, 1991), they may be reluctant to assert their cultural identities (Fukuyama & Coleman, 1992; Zane, 1991) or even assume a passive, "victim mentality" (Ku, 1992), leading to isolation from mainstream groups as well as other Asians (Wang, 1992). Additionally, bilingual college students often encounter difficulty with standardized entrance exams (Endo, 1990) and may require approaches to literacy instruction that differ from practices used to teach mainstream populations (Valdes, 1991).

Studies at the primary (Schmidt, 1993), elementary (Au, 1993), secondary (Nieto, 1992), and college levels (Stevens & Phillips, 1990) indicate that ethnic and language minority students experience many tensions between home and school cultures. Cultural tensions may result in strained family relationships, alienation and isolation, or poor academic performance. Vivian, the informant in this study, experienced many conflicts arising from her ethnic background and language: in educational settings, language and communication, interpersonal relations, between home and school cultures, and economic tensions. Her experiences may inform educators who teach language or ethnic minority students and preservice teachers, offer insight into needed recruitment practices for language and ethnic minority preservice teachers, provide information about the needs and literacies of bilingual or ethnic minority college students, and guide future research.

Method

Participant and Setting

Vivian was one of 23 students entering a new, pilot undergraduate teacher education program at a large, private northeastern university. The program was designed to prepare students for teaching certification in both elementary and special education. Its stated goals stressed appreciation for student diversity, development of reflective teaching and increased sensitivity of cultural differences, inclusion of all students through "hands-on," "student centered" learning, and adaptation of methods and materials to accommodate individual needs.

Vivian was purposefully selected (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992) because she was the only Asian and language minority student and one of three women of color in the target population. She describes her ethnic background as "Chinese" although she was born in Viet Nam. Her native language is Cantonese, although she also speaks Mandarin, Vietnamese, and English. She was 19 years old when the study began.

Theoretical Framework

Symbolic interaction (Blumer, 1969), which posits that people act based on their interpretations of social situations, served as the theoretical basis for this study. Vivian's interactions and understandings of her experiences were explored through varied means of data over a two year period. Ongoing observations and conversations with Vivian informed data analysis, also in keeping with the tenets of this framework.

Data Collection

A case study format was used in order to "uncover events or processes that one might miss with more superficial methods" (Biddle & Anderson, 1986, p. 238). Data were drawn from multiple sources, in order to develop detailed understandings of Vivian's experiences. These

included: (a) participant observation field notes in academic and non academic settings; (b) audiotaped interviews; (c) student work such as exams, academic assignments, personal journals, lesson plans, video tapes, and a teaching portfolio; (d) course syllabi and program documents; and (e) interviews with faculty, family, peers, and staff with whom Vivian interacted.

Data collection was ongoing during the two years that Vivian was enrolled in her full time teacher education program. She was interviewed twice during the first semester and once during subsequent semesters and summer vacations. Interviews ranged in length from one and a half to over three hours and were transcribed verbatim. Questions centered on her past and present experiences, her goals, concerns, and expectations. The open ended nature of the interviews allowed her to introduce or diverge from topics at will. Because learning is tied to social and cultural experiences in home and school settings (Heath, 1983; McCaleb, 1994), I compiled field notes each semester as I observed and interacted with Vivian in and out of university classrooms, met her family and friends, shared meals, and talked at least weekly and often daily on the phone with her. Vivian's written work, course and program documents, interviews with faculty members and support staff at the university, and informal, untaped interviews with her family and friends provided additional background information for the study.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed in an ongoing manner using constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Multiple sources of data allowed triangulation of findings (Denzin, 1978). Verification of results was obtained through comparison of data collected from various sources and by asking Vivian to comment on findings. The analysis generated the following themes: tensions in educational settings, tensions between home and school cultures, tensions in language and communicational styles, economic tensions, and tensions in interpersonal relationships.

Results

Tensions in Educational Settings: "Here and There" "Then and Now"

Vivian often spoke of "here" and "there;" "then" and "now," revealing profound tensions between her school and home cultures in the past and present. As an ethnic Chinese living in Viet Nam after its fall to the Communists, she endured conflict and humiliation as a child, because the Vietnamese schools were controlled by an ethnic group that differed from her own. She recalled how, "When I went to school, all Vietnamese teachers there and I don't really understand them, so when I talk they hit me...use a big stick hard! Every day I fight...I go into hysteria and say I don't want to go." The ideologies, culture, and language of Vietnamese schools contradicted Vivian's Chinese heritage and home values. She began to attend covert schools in Chinese homes. These secret sessions were illegal and the penalty for discovery high, but her parents "took the risk" in order to teach their children "the Chinese culture." Classes were:

> ...over there in somebody's house, on somebody's floor, five to ten kids. We had kindergarten through maybe junior high...We'd move around and change when they would find us... I spoke Chinese, always Chinese...If they find out I go to this tutor, the teacher would be in trouble, big trouble...We would use the newspaper to wrap around the textbook so that no one would know...One time we didn't have textbooks because the government said we weren' t allowed to have Chinese class. My teacher, she was the only one who had the book, so I had to borrow and copy it...I have really good Chinese writing, because I used to copy whole books.

At age fifteen, Vivian, her mother, father and younger sister escaped to the United States, enduring a series of hardships and struggles in the hope of a better future.

> We bribed everybody to get out...if you had anything wrong they'd send you back, break up the family, so we pay everybody under the table...[We went first] to Thailand to a refugee camp...the spoon that you use for soup, if you hold it wrong they beat you, I saw

> that...Then we flew to the Philippines -- no water, no light...[there is] one bed for maybe each family ...twelve families in each house...Each person allowed to take only 22 pounds, we took some clothes and pictures of the family -- but not that much -- something from my Grandmother and from our friends -- only a few souvenirs...We were allowed only 20 dollars American each and some gold...My parents sewed money into my jeans label. This was very dangerous and they asked me if I'd dare to do this and I said yes... The government took our house...we left everything...it was really hard to leave my friends, when I left, I didn't expect to see them again...But my parents want me to get a good education, that's why we left...The reason they come here is because of us, the reason they take all the bitterness is for our education.

Vivian still carries a worn but carefully preserved black and white photograph of her Chinese tutor in her wallet. She sadly admits she doesn't know what became her. This is one of the few "souvenirs" that remains from her past in Viet Nam and serves as a tangible representation of the value she and her family place on education. Although Vivian's family wanted to leave "the bitterness" of their past when they immigrated to the United States "for education and a better life," they found that in the United States, "Everything was new -- new food, language, people, city...Sometimes it was exciting, but we know very few people, and sometimes it got to be too much...Now that we're here, it's really hard, the culture."

The "culture" of the large, public, urban high school Vivian entered at age 15 was "really hard." She was "shocked" at the ways American high school students behaved.

> The students were very loud, very disrespectful...I was shocked...It was very different from what I was used to...In Chinese culture, we give respect to elders, much respect to teachers...You stay very quiet, listen, discipline, very strict...Take things really serious...don't really kidding around too much, only to peers, but to adults, teachers, seriousness. So I just remained very quiet, very respectful. It was really hard because I really couldn't say anything to anybody. There was no one at school and my parents had

given up so much to come here so I couldn't complain...I just try to do my best and keep really quiet. I just figured it out on my own.

Vivian experienced feelings of isolation and voicelessness throughout much of her early education. She responded by "figuring" problems "out on her own" because she felt that "speaking up" was "disrespectful." Her conflicts about values of education and appropriate student teacher relations continued in the college setting. She criticized classmates she called "talkers," or "complainers," who didn't "work hard" or "take learning seriously." Yet at the same time, she said often that it was "important" "to have fun" and "to be accepted by peers." As the study progressed, she spoke increasingly about how she wanted a "social life" at college, and described many tensions these desires created between her home and school cultures.

Tensions Between Home and School Culture: "Don't tell my parents."

When Vivian decided to attend college "away from home," her parents were "very displeased. They allowed me to move out of the house only because there are family members here and they could keep an eye on me." This was the first of many struggles between her home and school cultures during her post secondary education.

Vivian wanted to "be American" and during the study, she proudly became a U.S. citizen. I saw many signs of her increasing "Americanization" during the study: a raucous birthday party held in her dorm room; dancing and drinking at bars with friends on a Friday night instead of studying alone in the library; rock music she began to play ; new items like shorts, Reebok tennis shoes and oversized sweatshirts that replaced conservative skirts and long pants in her wardrobe; her increasing willingness to break school rules, like when she smuggled her sister into the dorms for a weekend; and slang that crept into her talk. These changes created many tensions for Vivian, because her home environment was "totally different" from the University:

At home we always have traditional Chinese meals, we bless our elders in the family at the table...very quiet, very respectful...We listen to Chinese opera, always speak Chinese

> language. We don't go out much, and if I try, it's a battle and I'm home at night. It's stay in the family, stay at home, listen to our parents...Women don't wear shorts -- always dresses, always covered up...My Mother cooks -- my Father never , ever do housework -- and my sister studies. They are very traditional, very isolated, speak only with other Chinese, kinda mistrustful, kinda alone...They still think I'm a little girl. So when I'm there, I'm totally different than here.

Many common college experiences -- dating, drinking, socializing, and establishing peer relationships -- were opposed to the traditional values of Vivian's home life. She responded by being "totally different" at home and at school. She also demonstrated conflicts in gender roles when she described her "traditional" home life and how her parents were trying to "make a match" "between the son of another family" and herself. "We still have that in the Chinese culture -- family and friends get together and tell the daughter what to do, but he's just a friend." When Vivian wanted to date a Japanese man, she revealed conflicts in race, gender, and social interactions she experienced throughout the study:

> He's Japanese --- I'd could never tell my parents that. I'd never bring him home. My parents would lose their minds...I'm caught between the Chinese and the American ways of doing things. My friends say, 'Go up to him and ask him out, invite him over to your room.' But I hear my parents' voices saying, 'Don't be forward. Women aren't forward. Wait for him to ask'...My friends say, 'Go up and talk to him.' But I was always taught to wait. But I've learned here you have to go up and talk to people. I do the opposite of what they want you to do when I'm here...One of my friends moved in with a white guy. Her parents know, but I'd never, ever tell mine. They'd be like, you stay away from her! What kind of life are you leading up there any way? You get home right now! [laughs]. I feel like I want to cross lines, like gender, ethnicity, race lines, while I have the chance, but that is here...So all the things they don't know about, I keep them here, but when I go home it's tricky. I'm completely different at home and sometimes it's hard to keep it straight.

Sometimes I can't remember which way I need to be. Like over Christmas break, I drank a beer there and they were really shocked. I got in big trouble for that one.

Despite her desires for "belonging" to the college and U.S. cultures, Vivian also took great pride in her ethnic and linguistic heritage. She was quadrilingual and was delighted when taught her students and me Chinese characters and stories. She constantly read Chinese literature and periodicals and attended a Chinese-speaking church because she didn't "want to lose" her "language." She listened to Chinese opera and popular music, wrote long letters in Chinese to her family, and enjoyed discussing oriental art because she said these activities reflected "who [she was]."

However, Vivian was "caught between the Chinese and the American ways of doing things" and experienced conflicts in determining "which way she needed to be." She acted "completely different" in home and college settings. She admitted that this "caused distance" and "trouble" between her parents and herself, that she felt "bad for lying," and that it was "tricky" maintaining these dual roles. She began to repeat the phrase to me and her friends, "Don't tell my parents," as she struggled to reconcile her home and school experiences. Her ethnic heritage stressed the importance of "respect" to "elders" and "tradition," yet she wanted "to cross lines," creating myriad tensions. Vivian moved away from the traditions and security of her family and home culture, as she began to distance herself from her parents' control, but found that her "language problems" and communicational behaviors prevented her from being accepted fully into the school culture. As a result, she often felt "isolated" and "invisible," disempowered and confused.

Tensions in Language and Communication: "I want to learn English but I'm really quiet."

Vivian's early educational experiences of isolation and difference in Viet Nam continued in high school. Her self described "language problems" "isolated" her during secondary education:

I didn't speak very good English,they put me in this class, an ESL class...when I go to

> the regular classrooms I don't really know what's going on... In ESL, I spend all my time with other Asians talking Chinese...I don't really hang out with any white students then because I felt very uncomfortable about the way I talked. I was really isolated.

Vivian experienced other language and communicational difficulties that had profound consequences for her at this time. She was "isolated" academically, as well as socially:

> They tested me wrong...put me in wrong grade...I didn't know I was in wrong grade for one year...The teachers didn't really care...I couldn't speak much English, and I don't know any better...When they found out, they just leave me there, so I graduate early...I was pretty much on my own, so I just keep quiet and do my best.

Vivian often "kept quiet" when she had a problem, instead doing "her best" by working and persisting alone. Although she had little encouragement, she "always knew" that she would become a teacher. She graduated from high school at age 16 to pursue a degree in education. She recalled how the forms required for college entrance "were a nightmare," and "very confusing," but she "somehow got them out." Her primary goal for college was "to talk English, write better, learn really good English...I want friends so I can practice English." But she admitted that she had made few "non Asian" friends because of language barriers and her "quiet" communicational style. "I don't always talk much in class, sometimes I'm embarrassed, you know, but I listen and try. But they don't listen to you because you're really quiet and your accent."

When Vivian entered college, although her English improved at an astonishing rate, language posed many difficulties for her. She struggled to fulfill the requirements of her courses. She explained, "When I read and write, I'm really slow...It takes me much longer than my peers." On weekends while other students enjoyed breaks, Vivian trudged to the computer lab or library to work. Her health deteriorated as she missed meals and sleep to study; she became more "stressed" and "isolated" as she struggled to keep up. At one point, she commented sadly, "I study all the time...I want to do well in school, but I feel like a machine -- working all the time." The time Vivian spent studying alone exacerbated her feelings of isolation and difference.

Ironically, the depth of Vivian's understanding of content and the sophistication of her teaching practice were exceptional, but many of her faculty or peers were never privy to her insights and experiences because of her "quiet" interactional style. Her classmates described her as "nice" or "sweet" but rarely mentioned her in casual conversations, engaged in meaningful interactions with her, or included her in social activities. During faculty interviews, several professors were "surprised" or "shocked" when I described instances of her teaching practice that demonstrated the depth of her understandings of course content. They made comments like, "She's so quiet...You'd never know." Despite her superior grasp of pedagogy, she struggled to express her thoughts "on paper" for assignments and flunked her first student teaching placement in her senior year. Although her lesson plans were "good," and her host teacher was pleased with her performance, Vivian's conferences with faculty and supervisors "went very poorly." She explained that while she was "comfortable" talking with me and her host teacher, language and communicational differences had caused misunderstandings with her University evaluators :

> It's a language problem, a communication problem, a connection problem...I think it comes from where I come from and where they come from...They expect one thing-- one way of interacting -- I think they want me to be more aggressive. But I expect other things-- that they should more guiding and suggesting. I'm too quiet -- they read that as lack of interest or understanding...I don't know what they want, so I'm just quiet and try to figure it out. I can't make myself really talk with them. I'm very quiet. I was always taught to respect teachers -- not speak up -- not show disrespect... I just freeze up and get really quiet. I don't stand up for myself, so I think they see that as not getting it.

Poor home school communication and culturally based perceptions of teacher roles added to Vivian's conflicts. She described how her parents reacted when she told them she "had failed:"

> They don't speak English that good. They can't call up like some people's parents and talk to faculty. I know some people's parents do that-- get involved. But they wouldn't think that was right ...When I first told them they said, 'Isn't it good that they're pointing out all

> the things you need to improve?' In our culture, that's what teachers do. They point out the student faults and the student does what she is told. But here, it's not that simple. It's different. I don't know what they want...Something in me just keeps me from speaking up and getting it straight. The more they talk at me, the more I lose my confidence. And now I'm really questioning if I should even be teaching.

After flunking, Vivian "lost her confidence" and almost quit the teaching profession. It was not the first time that language difficulties and cultural conflicts had caused her to question her career decisions. Because it took her a year to pass a writing competency exam required for entrance to her program, she almost changed majors. She worried about the knowledge needed on the state teaching certification exam, "because the more Western cultural stuff will be a problem." She also struggled to pay for and pass required standardized tests for graduate study. When she began to apply for graduate school and teaching positions, she had great difficulty understanding forms and had "no clue" how to write a resume.

Vivian sought out supportive faculty and said she graduated "because certain people cared enough to listen to me, took the time to help me." During the study, I became a mentor of sorts to her, helping her with written tasks, inviting her to meals, role-playing educational situations to help her develop effective communications strategies, and encouraging her. She told me, "I would have quit if it wasn't for you. I really would have. I felt like I had nobody, and you were always listening and helping -- I'll never forget that."

Although Vivian experienced many language difficulties during her teacher preparation, she said, "My most important learning at college is social -- language, communication, learning English and learning to talk with many people." Her comments were ironic, given the economic and racial barriers she faced during her college experiences.

Economic Tensions: Cars and Computers

Vivian's 62 year old parents, who were an engineer and bank manager in Viet Nam, now

live in a small, cramped "lower class" apartment. Her father is a factory worker; her mother labors in a Chinese laundry, in order "to give" Vivian and her sister "an education." Vivian felt "really guilty at the sacrifices" her parents were making. This guilt was heightened by her competing desires to "do well in school" and "have a social life."

Vivian experienced many economic difficulties in college. She said that most of her classmates were "pretty rich...and the faculty just assume you have a car and a computer, lots of money for supplies." Each semester she struggled to find rides to her placements, often falling behind in required visits because of lack of transportation. She spent hours riding or waiting for buses during cold winter weather and would work in nearly deserted computer clusters late at night, then walk home alone. Vivian worried about the cost of her education, but was reluctant about "asking my parents for anything more," and admitted this "detracts from my focus and study." Other students bought elaborate presents for their pupils at placements or spent large sums on their exit portfolios, and despite her limited funds, Vivian felt the need to "compete." She amassed a sizable student loan debt because there were inadequate funds to pay for her tuition, and struggled to find funds to pay for items that "many faculty and students just take for granted." Vivian often completed 20 or more hours a week at her work study, which placed even more demands on her schedule and failing health.

Tensions in Interpersonal Relations:

Stereotyping and Prejudice or, "What's the Asian Point of View?"

In our first interview, Vivian remarked, "People here don't understand Asians. They've never really had them around and so they don't know what we're about...They see everybody the same...doesn't matter who you are...people here are really ignorant about Asians." Although Vivian initially asserted that she "really [hadn't] encountered prejudice, like people being mean or anything," as time passed, she began to share disturbing instances of racial conflicts and prejudice. One university faculty member asked her in class, "So what do you think the Asian point of view

would be here?" Vivian "said nothing" in class, but later explained sarcastically, "Like I can speak for 5 billion Chinese, and all the Koreans and Japanese and Vietnamese too. After all, all of us are alike." She was clearly offended, then added:

> There are little things, like mispronouncing my name. I love my name -- but they say, 'It's so hard to say it.' I say, 'Well can't you put in alittle effort?' They kept mispronouncing my name, and finally I just gave up...or talking really loud. I'm not deaf ... [names faculty] used to always turn to me in class and say, 'So do you understand ?' Direct it to me, loud, personally, not like checking, but like singling me out...Or they act so glad to have you in class, but they pass you in the halls and you're the invisible student ...It's all big smile in class and then at 11:35 -- you walk out and they totally ignore you.

Vivian encountered instances of prejudice in her school placements as well. A host teacher commented, "We've never had one of your type here before -- I mean the Oriental type. To be honest, I was expecting a white girl." Vivian explained an incident that typified how she often felt when she entered a placement:

> I was always a little concerned -- You walk in the buildings and you never see any Asians. I'm the only Asian in the whole school...I was in the lunchroom with other teachers and one says to me...'You could tell me -- I want to know about Chinese New Year.' I thought at first that was really nice, but then, after I talk to her alittle bit, it's like she thinks all Asians are the same. She starts asking me about, 'Do they do the same thing in Japan?' 'How 'bout Korea?' How would I know? I've never been there. But she just assumes.

Vivian said that this teacher "may be prejudiced, but probably means well -- maybe just not thinking." Her recollections of comments made by faculty and host teachers suggest the danger of educators "assuming" cultural stereotypes and how remarks that may be offered as support are sometimes perceived in negative ways by minority students. Vivian's isolation and cultural conflicts were also evident in her interactions with her white classmates. She described her relationships with them as "polite" but "distant:"

> My friends [are] all outside education...you are my education friend...you and the teachers [names two university professors] are the ones I go to and talk to mostly if I have a problem or I need help...The other students are mostly nice, some are ok, but I don't really have real friendships with any...I work with [names various students] but afterwards we aren't really friends...Some aren't very serious [frowns]... Nobody's mean or anything, in fact sometimes they're too nice, like distant. It's like overcompensation -- is that a word? -- too nice and polite -- no kidding around, no closeness, I think they see me as sort of works hard but not fun -- ok for work but not as a real friend. So we talk, but not talk talk, like really [stressed] talk. I think they don't know who I really am.

Vivian experienced conflicts among her own values of work and expectations for interaction with those of her peers. She often noted that in her family and culture, "education and work are the most important thing," yet perceived that many of her classmates were "not serious" about college learning. However, she also wistfully noted how she wanted "friends and collaboration," but that her "language problems," tendency to remain "quiet," work obligations, and time devoted to study prevented her from forming meaningful relationships in college. Her interactions with peers were brief, "too nice and polite," and displayed "no kidding around, no closeness." Sadly, her classmates remained largely unaware of "who" Vivian was, despite her rich background and educational accomplishments.

Vivian encountered additional tensions with her Asian peers "outside of education." Because she wanted "friends of all colors, all types, all ethnicities," she was excluded from some of the Chinese cliques on campus. When she chose to study with non Asian students or alone, she described how one Chinese student said to her, "You're a banana...Yellow outside --white inside. You gotta choose where you're going to be. You can't be with us and with them too."

Only with her pupils did Vivian find acceptance and appreciation of her cultural heritage. When she described teaching in her classroom, she explained:

> Being Asian is a plus there, a positive thing. The kids wanted to know why my hair was so

straight. They were really curious. They wanted to touch it and find out. 'Where did you come from?' 'What is it like where you used to live?' 'Teach me Chinese language.' They thought it was cool that I was different. They'd tell me, 'that's pretty neat.'

Despite her experiences, Vivian remained largely optimistic and positive. She continued to seek out supportive faculty and worked "really hard" to talk with her host teacher. Although she admitted she had failed to develop "real friendships" with her classmates, she delivered hand written notes to each one during their last class, thanking them for the ways they had enriched her life. Although Vivian repeatedly told me, "I don't want to complain," at the end of the study, she revealed her feelings of isolation, conflict, and hurt when she asked:

> Do you think I'm a token? So they can say, 'Look, we have an Asian in our program?' Sometimes I think it's prejudice -- they don't want to hear me or even really see me...They have an image of us, I think -- they tell us not to do that with our students but they have one of us -- and my image is the nice smiling quiet cheerful Asian girl who works hard and never gives trouble [pause]. It's almost like being a doll...I think they have stereotypes about Asians -- we're hard working and keep to ourselves -- but Asians are also sort of passive. We won't speak up. So I think they capitalized on that and sort of took advantage some times -- other times I think it's just not knowing or thinking.

Throughout the study, Vivian showed me my own implicit stereotypes. In an early interview, I brought her books about Viet Nam, assuming she would identify with these. Gently, she told me that although she lived in Viet Nam, she is "Chinese" and "Cantonese," sharing her own culture's folktales and customs with me. Through our conversations, I, in turn, became more aware and critical of the cultural myths from which I draw. For instance, one night, we spent hours paging through Chinese and U.S. periodicals. As we exchanged explanations of the textual references that the advertisements evoked, I became aware of my own cultural situatedness. In the many hours we spent talking, Vivian improved her English and learned "American ways;" I learned Chinese words and about my own background. I invited her to her first Thanksgiving

meal; she "cooked Chinese." I also found that we shared many common values -- the importance of hard work and teaching, a love of children and learning. In time, I found that Vivian played piano and guitar, was a talented artist and athlete, and had a keen, often biting sense of humor. It was ironic that most of her classmates and teachers never knew these many sides of her.

Despite her difficulties, Vivian graduated and now attends a prestigious Graduate School. However, she continues to experience many of the same tensions present in her undergraduate education: conflicts among home and school roles and values, difficulties with time and funding, and feelings of isolation, confusion, and stress.

Discussion and Implications

Findings of this study support prior research that finds bilingual and ethnic minority students experience many tensions as they attempt to reconcile home and school cultures. Vivian's experiences suggest several implications for literacy instruction in school classrooms and preservice education. Although her parents made "great sacrifices" and were clearly interested in her education, they were uninvolved and voiceless in academic settings. The isolation and tensions she experienced throughout her education support the need to involve families at all levels of education through projects that connect home and school (McCaleb, 1994). Vivian's conflicts between "the Chinese and the American ways of doing things" might have been lessened if Au's (1993) redefinitions of literacy were followed in her early classrooms: use of varied texts, writing based on students' experiences, culturally responsive instruction, and critical literacy. Despite recent changes in some bilingual programs, Vivian's high school experiences invite educators to examine and develop new models of instruction for bilingual students.

Results here also invite an examination of the assignments preservice teachers do. Duffy (1991) criticizes much of the work in teacher education as unauthentic and evaluation based, leading to disempowerment of teachers. This silencing and distancing may be particularly acute for ethnic or language minority preservice students like Vivian, who struggle to fulfill traditional,

written assignments, complete culturally or linguistically biased exams, and communicate with evaluators whose backgrounds differ from their own. The powerful experiences Vivian shared with me could have been a important tool to inform her classmates and teachers; instead she, her classmates, and teachers missed an opportunity to foster meaningful under-standings of people and cultures.

Activities that employ talk may offer an alternative to traditional assignments during teacher preparation. Zitlow and DeCoker (1994) describe how using personal narratives to explore cultural values empowers ethnic and language minority preservice teachers and improves their white classmates' cultural awareness. Despite her attempts to forge connections with her peers, Vivian remained a "quiet," "invisible student" throughout much of her education. Florio-Ruane's (1994) notion of an "autobiography club," where small groups of preservice teachers meet in informal settings to discuss multicultural literature may have provided the non threatening environment that would have allowed her to share ideas and build friendships with her peers. The need for opportunities to talk about cultural issues and resolution of conflicts (Florio-Ruane & de Tar, 1995) also are indicated by this study's findings. It is likely that Vivian and her classmates might also have benefitted from instruction in effective communication strategies, or through assignments that employed discourse analysis of their own and others' speech behaviors, role playing, and guided discussions.

Vivian's experiences suggest needed changes in teacher recruitment, preservice education programs, and college policies. Educators recognize the need to recruit and retain nonwhite and bilingual individuals in the teaching profession (Di Martino, 1993; Dillard, 1994; Kestner, 1994), but identify deficiencies in multicultural teacher preparation programs (Reyhner, 1991; Sleeter & Grant, 1993). Results here support these criticisms. Vivian reported that no one recruited her to become a teacher in high school, suggesting that mechanisms need to be developed at the secondary level that will encourage ethnic and language minority individuals to consider teaching as a career. It is ironic that Vivian's rich cultural background, strong beliefs, and deep

understanding of teaching remained largely untapped by her classmates, especially when notions of "celebrating diversity" were a stated cornerstone of her program. Researchers also suggest that varied educational experiences, cultural and community concerns, and social and economic obstacles prevent many students of color from entering teaching (Di Martino, 1993; Dillard, 1994; Kestner, 1994; Morton, 1994). Vivian encountered many social, economic and academic barriers during her teacher preparation, demonstrating that financial aid, application assistance or incentives, and ongoing academic support services must be truly committed and extended if we are to recruit and retain qualified minority applicants in the teaching force. Next, her difficulties with gatekeeping devices like departmental and state certification examinations imply that educators need to develop criteria to assess teacher competence when working with diverse populations so that we may effectively teach preservice teachers strategies that fit with the populations they will teach (Hollins, 1993). Last, Vivian's identification of the importance of supportive faculty and my own role in her education supports Mueller's (1993) view that mentors are particularly important for Asian college students and perhaps for all preservice teachers. Teacher educators might explore possibilities of assigning graduate assistants or faculty mentors for their students.

Zitlow and DeCoker (1994) found that ethnic minority preservice teachers expressed a deep concern about their cultural identities, stressing "the need to educate others about us," but often remain silent in academic settings (p. 71). Vivian suffered from a lack of "confidence" and friendships throughout the study, in large part because she was unable to express and resolve cultural and linguistic conflicts (Phinney & Alipura, 1990). These findings show that ways must be found to assist all preservice teachers to explore issues of race and to promote intercultural understandings. Projects like collaborative community autobiographies constructed among preservice teachers, students, and their families (McCaleb, 1994), sharing of personal journals (Farber & Armaline, 1994), writing of cultural autobiographies and examination of stereotypes in mass media (Watts Pailliotet, 1995), personal histories (Zitlow & De Coker, 1994), and interviews or story telling with members of different ethnic communities offer ways to promote cultural

understandings and interactions among preservice teachers.

Last, despite the rhetoric of increased tolerance on college campuses and in schools, Vivian's experiences indicate that prejudice and racial tensions remain serious problems in educational settings. Many of her classmates appeared to hold implicit racist perspectives (Short, 1992). Comments made by members of Vivian's faculty and her host teachers may have been well-intentioned, but she felt "singled out," misunderstood, and "isolated" as a "token." Magner (1993) suggests that educators often see all Asians as a single group. The same stereotyping behaviors are in play when we speak of "Hispanic," "African American," or "Native American" individuals. Results of this study suggest that true multicultural education must acknowledge individual differences within ethnic groups and find ways to create connections between people, as well as merely developing terminology and curricula. Further in-depth research about language and ethnic minority preservice teachers, particularly case studies and personal narratives, is indicated in order to understand their needs and experiences. Vivian wasn't sure whether many of the biases and barriers she experienced were a result of "conscious" or "not knowing." Our task as educators and researchers is to hear and see "quiet" and "invisible" students like Vivian, in order to welcome all individuals into schools, college campuses, and the teaching profession.

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